# Wellness-Fitness FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

### Living Well with Arthritis

Living well with arthritis is about taking charge and becoming an expert at your own self-care.



Self-care is essential for people living with arthritis. It starts with knowing your body and what works best for you. Be aware that your body—and its capabilities—may change day to day, even hour to hour.

#### **Stay active**

For many years, people with arthritis were told to limit their exercise to avoid an increased risk of damage to their joints. Research has shown that exercise is actually an essential part of living well with arthritis. And while people with arthritis should first discuss exercise options with their health care providers, it has now been shown that arthritis sufferers benefit from a variety of exercises designed for them. For example, gentle range-of-motion exercises help maintain normal joint movement, and strength training can strengthen muscles that support affected joints.

Properly executed, exercise may reduce joint pain and stiffness, strengthen muscles, help bone and cartilage stay strong and healthy, and improve the ability to manage everyday activities. In conjunction with approved medicine, ample rest, and a prescribed treatment program, regular exercise can help keep joints in working order and vastly improve the quality of one's life.

Work closely with your health care provider, and, if you've been advised to stay active, choose those physical activities that are safe and that really bring you joy and lift your spirits.

#### **Eat Well**

While eating well doesn't affect arthritis directly, it does help your body repair and recover. It can also help you stay at (or get to) a healthy weight. So, think "health first" when you make those daily food choices.

#### **Watch Your Weight**

Whether maintaining your current healthy weight or losing weight, the key to success is ongoing lifestyle choices that include long-term changes in daily eating and physical activity habits. Realistic goals with small and consistent wins will bring you to a weight that is healthy for you.

#### **Choose a Positive Attitude**

While the pain of arthritis can be overwhelming at times, try to take a positive attitude to help you live well with it. A positive attitude can also keep you on track with your self-care. The better you feel about yourself, the more motivated you'll be to take care of yourself.





## Managing Post-Workout Soreness

Don't let post-workout pain and soreness slow you down. Here are some useful tips that can help you protect your joints and muscles.

It's not unusual to experience soreness after a workout. In fact, you're more likely to be sore if:

- You did an activity that you're not used to (like hiking all day when you've never done that before)
- You suddenly increase the intensity, difficulty, or duration of your workout

However, there's good news: As you continue to exercise, your muscles will adapt and get used to your workouts. Over time, your muscles, joints, and connective tissues should strengthen and your post-workout soreness should decrease.

#### WAYS TO REDUCE POST-WORKOUT PAIN AND SORENESS

- Warm up before you exercise, gently stretching the muscles you'll be using
- Ease into your routine. Start off with lighter exercises—go easy and build yourself up gradually
- Stretch immediately after your workout

### OPTIONS TO MANAGE MINOR PAIN AND SORENESS

#### **CRYOTHERAPY (ICE THERAPY)**

 Cold temperatures reduce blood flow and reduce tissue swelling. If you are experiencing inflammation or swelling after a workout, applying ice to your muscles and joints may help to reduce swelling.

**HYDROTHERAPY** – Warm water may help to ease joint and muscle discomfort. If you are experiencing pain or soreness without swelling after a workout, try taking a warm bath. The hot water may help to relieve some of the pain.

#### **OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE**

 You may use pain relievers (like acetaminophen or NSAIDs) sparingly to relieve discomfort, swelling, and stiffness.

#### TAKE A LIGHTER APPROACH

 Don't stop moving altogether just because you're sore. You may benefit from doing activities that move and warm the joints and muscles without using heavy weights.

If your muscles or joints are sore after you exercise, there may be a couple of reasons:

**OVERUSE** – Exerting yourself beyond your normal level of activity can cause microscopic tearing of the muscle fibers. This tearing heals itself, but you may feel sore.

osteoarthritis – This condition is caused when the cartilage that cushions your joints begins to wear away. Your joints can become swollen and stiff, causing you to experience pain.

**INJURY** – The sudden and sharp pain of an injury is different from the pain you can get from overexertion.

If you've injured yourself or think you may have arthritis talk to your health care provider immediately.

As always, be sure to check with your doctor before starting any exercise regimen.



### Changing Thoughts Changes Attitudes: Positive Affirmations

two

challenge

task

way

Affirmations are a great tool for supporting a positive change in your life and an effective way to reprogram old patterns.

defined

sale

event

lenjoy

Positive affirmations are a good way to make a clear intention of how you want things in your life to be. For example, you might say to yourself: "Today is going to be a productive day," or "I'm calm and patient now."

At first, affirmations may just feel like empty words and maybe even a little silly, but the more often you say them to yourself—either aloud or mentally—the stronger the effects. The whole point is to turn around some of the mind's automatic negative responses and to "retrain" your brain.

Our experiences are colored by many things, including whether or not we have a positive outlook. For example, when you're tired or not feeling well, you can often be more easily irritated or view things in a negative light. By using positive affirmations, you get to set the tone and take control.

allow

involve

projects

together

teamwork

quality

#### **General life affirmations**

- I deserve to be happy today.
- I am making healthy choices today.
- It's easy for me to be patient now.
- Things are going well for me.
- I choose—and enjoy healthy foods today.

#### **Work affirmations**

- Today is a productive day.
- Every day I have less and less stress.
- I have enough time to

accomplish everything I need to get done.

- I'm patient with my coworkers today.

Ideally, you want to say your affirmations every day—even multiple times per day.

#### game Steady as you go

Consistency is key to affirmations. Do them regularly and often, so that they become part of your new way of thinking. Like the fitness and strength that come with exercise, a new, more positive attitude usually takes repetition over time.

#### Make a positive statement

Affirmation should be made as a positive statement. For example, "I am making healthy food choices today." Rather than, "I won't eat junk food."

#### Live in the now

If possible make the statement for the here and now. For example, "I am making healthy choices today." Rather than, "I will fit into my new swimsuit in a month."

#### Remember and repeat

Remember the affirmation whenever challenging or negative thoughts come your way. For example, if you get a challenging email, just remember and repeat, "I find it easy to be patient with my coworkers today."

The productive policy p

### Reasons to Buy "In Season"

In-season and local produce tends to be the freshest, best-tasting, and most affordable.

Thanks to modern farming technology, world food markets, and international shipping, you can pretty much buy any fruits and vegetables you want at any time of the year. However, there are some really good reasons to buy them when they are "in season." Produce bought in season and from nearby farms is usually at its nutritional peak, and the height of flavor and freshness. And it doesn't hurt that in-season produce tends to be the cheapest, so you will save some "green" by buying it.

WINTER **Apples** Belgian Endive **Bok Choy Brussels Sprouts** Cherimoya Chestnuts Coconuts Dates Grapefruit Kale Leeks Mushrooms Oranges **Parsnips** Pear

Persimmons Radicchio **Red Currents** Rutabagas **Sweet Potatoes Tangerines Turnips** Winter Squash

**SPRING Apricots Artichokes** Asparagus Baby Lettuce Broccoli Chives Collard Greens

Fava Beans Fennel Green Beans Honevdew Mango Morel Mushrooms

Mustard Greens Oranges Limes Peas Pineapple Rhubarb **Snow Peas** Spinach Strawberries Sweet Corn Sugar Snap Peas

Swiss Chard

Watercress

Vidalia Onions

**SUMMER** 

Apricots **Beets Bell Peppers** Blackberries **Blueberries** Boysenberries Cantaloupe Casaba Melon Cherries Cucumbers Eggplant Figs Garlic Grapefruit Grapes Green Beans Green Peas Honeydew Melons

Kiwifruit Lima Beans Limes Loganberries **Nectarines** Okra Peaches Plums Radishes Raspberries Strawberries Sweet Corn Summer Squash Tomatillo **Tomatoes** Watermelon Zucchini

Acorn Squash **Apples Bok Choy** Broccoli

**Brussels Sprouts** Butternut Squash Cauliflower Celery Root Chayote Squash Cherimoya Coconuts Cranberries Diakon Radish **Endive** 

Garlic

Ginger Grapes Guava Huckleberries Kohlrabi Kumquats Mushrooms **Parsnips** Persimmons Pineapple Pomegranate Pumpkin Ouince Rutabagas **Sweet Potatoes** Swish Chard **Turnips** Winter Squash

Yams



